

citizens have when they need emergency services. Over 500,000 9-1-1 calls are made every day across the country. Telecommunicators provide the best emergency assistance they can to each of the callers. People depend on the skill, expertise and commitment of telecommunicators who help save lives by responding to emergency calls, dispatching emergency professionals and equipment and providing support to citizens in distress. Telecommunicators also serve as the vital link for our police officers, sheriffs and firefighters by providing them with information and insuring their safety.

Public safety telecommunicators have a tremendous responsibility to remain calm while handling stressful situations. Amid panic and fear from a caller, public safety telecommunicators obtain the necessary information, make critical decisions and quickly dispatch the assistance that saves lives and property. Although they may be anonymous to callers, each of these men and women deserve praise and recognition for their hard work, not only during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week but every day.

I am proud of the heroic work of public safety telecommunicators, and I offer my sincerest thanks for their compassion and professionalism.●

TRIBUTE TO NORMAN M. RICH, M.D.

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Dr. Norman M. Rich, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery, F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences—USUHS. This week, on March 26, 2004, Dr. Rich will mark the end of his 44-year career in Federal service.

Dr. Rich's Federal career began in the U.S. Army where he served for 20 years as a career officer and physician from 1960 through 1980. As a military surgeon with academic interests in the management of injured patients and vascular surgery, he earned international recognition; his military awards include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Award and Vietnam Medals.

Dr. Rich was appointed as the Founding Chairman of the USUHS School of Medicine's Department of Surgery in August of 1977 and held that position until October of 2002. For the past 16 months, he has continued to serve as an advisor and mentor to the Acting Department Chairman.

As Founding Chairman, Dr. Rich was faced with the difficult task of establishing a Department of Surgery at a university where the campus had not yet been constructed. From the outset, Dr. Rich and his considerable reputation gave credibility to the newly established Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and enabled the recruitment of a competent faculty for its new Department of Surgery. He

utilized his collaborative relationships, both nationally and internationally, to strengthen his department's curricula and lectures and thereby provided a military and academically unique environment for the over 3,400 USUHS medical school graduates and thousands more future uniformed medical students.

Dr. Rich can take pride in having developed an academically sound curriculum, recruiting competent faculty with military unique expertise, meeting the initial and on-going accreditation requirements for the School of Medicine, and creating a sound national and global reputation for the university. His efforts have aided the School of Medicine in attaining full accreditation and he has helped shape USUHS graduates into what the Secretary of Defense has dubbed "the backbone of the Military Health System." Indeed, his efforts are reflected in the continued success of USUHS and its graduates and in the continued health of the millions of uniformed personnel and their families who have benefited from his extraordinary expertise.

During the course of his career, Dr. Rich has published over 300 manuscripts and authored or co-authored five books. Among these is the internationally recognized "Vascular Trauma." He has served on 10 editorial boards, including the major peer-reviewed journals focusing upon his specialty. His recent awards include: the 2003 National Safety Council Surgeons' Award for Distinguished Service in Safety presented by the American College of Surgeons, the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma, and the National Safety Council; recognition as a Citizen & Apothecary of London in 2001; and, the J.E. Wallace Sterling Lifetime Alumni Achievement Award from the Stanford Medical Alumni Association.

Our Nation can be proud of Dr. Rich's long and distinguished career of service and I am pleased to join with his family, friends and colleagues in expressing appreciation for the significant contributions he has made to the health of the uniformed services and that of all citizens. I certainly wish him continued success and happiness in the years to come.●

SIEGLINDE KURZ

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today I would like to commend Mrs. Sieglinde Kurz on her outstanding career as a public servant. Mrs. Kurz received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Fontbonne College, in St. Louis, MO in 1961 and her Masters Degree in Health Care Management from Northwestern University, in Evanston, IL in 1976.

I have worked with Mrs. Kurz on numerous occasions and I have always been impressed by her consummate professionalism. Her selfless attitude and intense work ethic have consistently led her to do great things within the field of veterans' health care.

Mrs. Kurz began her career with the Department of Veterans Affairs in November 1965 as a research chemist in renal hypertension research at the St. Louis VA Medical Center.

During her illustrious government career, Mrs. Kurz was the administrative assistant to the Associate Director in Hines, IL; Associate Director of the VA Medical Center in Tomah, WI; Associate Deputy Regional Director for the Northeastern Region in Albany, NY; Associate Director of the VA Medical Center in Marion, IL; Director of Construction Project Coordination and Budget at VA Headquarters in Washington, DC; and Director of the VA Medical Center in Marion, IL. She left the Marion VA Medical Center to accept the position of Director at the St. Louis VA Medical Center.

Mrs. Kurz served as the Director of the St. Louis VA for 5 years and 8 months, a term spanning from May 1998 thru January 2004. The St. Louis VA is one of the largest and most complex facilities in the nation and it has steadily improved under her guidance.

Mrs. Kurz provided leadership for this dual division hospital by facilitating care for more than 36,000 veterans annually. The primary service area of metropolitan St. Louis includes 9 counties in Missouri and 14 counties in West Central Illinois. During her tenure in St. Louis she led a care team of 1900 full time employee equivalents.

Mrs. Kurz's stellar career includes a number of achievements.

As a leader in the field of health care management she served as a mentor for executive career field director trainees and VHA Health Care management trainees. She also achieved the status of diplomat in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

Mrs. Kurz was listed as one of the top female directors in the Missouri Hospital Association Newsletter, Summer 2003 Edition, and in Who's Who Among Top Executives in 1998-1999. In 1999, during her tenure as Director of the St. Louis VA Medical Center, she was recognized with the Vice-Presidential "Hammer and Scissors" award for her efforts in piloting the first Department of Veterans Affairs Canteen Integration.

During her time at the St. Louis VA, Mrs. Kurz worked tirelessly to improve veterans' access to care and she opened three new health clinics. She also supported her employees by providing educational opportunities for mid-level managers through programs such as mini-MBA. She promoted an open policy that allowed staff at all levels to communicate through employee and supervisory forums.

After 37 years of government service, Mrs. Kurz retired on January 31, 2004, having devoted countless hours to the welfare of American Veterans. On behalf of all veterans in the St. Louis area, I would like to thank her for her tireless efforts and wish her well in her retirement.●